when the account is opened. These minimums and maximums are set regardless of the account balance. The algorithm, of course, also examines the account balance and does not permit a transfer in excess of the account balance. The ability to set maximum limits regardless of account balance is a tool that can be used to address problem gamblers, among other things.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1.   (Twice Amended)   A method for operating gaming devices interconnected by a network to a host computer comprising:

creating an anonymous player account at an automated card dispenser, said account being accessible by the host computer;

providing access to the account responsive to a first command initiated by a player at one of the gaming devices;

transferring credit from the account to the gaming device;

permitting gaming device play; and

cashing out from the gaming device responsive to a second command initiated by said player at said one gaming device.

2.   (Amended)   The method of claim 1 wherein creating an anonymous player account accessible by the host computer comprises:

providing a tracking card to the player;

storing an anonymous player record on the host computer;

receiving an initial cash deposit from the player; and

crediting the deposit to the account.

3.   (Twice Amended)   The method of claim 2 wherein said gaming devices are in a casino.

4.   The method of claim 1 wherein said first command comprises insertion of a player tracking card into a card reader associated with said one gaming device.

5.   The method of claim 4 wherein said second command comprises actuating a cash out actuator at said one gaming device.

6.   The method of claim 1 wherein said second command comprises actuating a cash-out actuator at said one gaming device.

7.   The method of claim 1 wherein providing access to the account comprises transmitting data representing the player account over the network to a local memory associated with said one gaming device.

8.   The method of claim 7 wherein transferring from the account to the gaming device comprises transferring data from the player account in the local memory to the credit meter.

9.   (Amended)   A method for secure cashless transfer of credit between a player account communicating with a networked gaming device comprising:
        receiving a request to transfer credit;
        reading the credit meter on said one gaming device before transferring credit;
        crediting the meter with the requested credit transfer;
        reading the credit meter on said one gaming device after crediting the meter;
        calculating the difference in the meter readings;
        comparing the calculated difference with the amount credited; and
        permitting gaming device play.

10.   (Amended)   The method of claim 9 wherein said method further includes deducting the calculated difference from the account balance.

11.   (Amended)   The method of claim 10 wherein said method further comprises storing the amount credited and the calculated difference at a location on the network remote from the player account.

12. (Amended) The method of claim 11 wherein a request to transfer credit from the account to the gaming device occurs responsive to a player-initiated command at said one gaming device.

13. (Amended) The method of claim 12 wherein the amount credited is predetermined.

14. (Amended) The method of claim 13 wherein the amount credited is a function of the balance in the player account.

15. (Amended) The method of claim 13 wherein the amount credited is a function of a classification of the player.

16. (Amended) The method of claim 13 wherein said method further comprises:
measuring the time between each player account transaction; and
locking the account when the measured time exceeds at least one established criterion.

17. A method for operating gaming devices interconnected by a network to a host computer comprising:
creating a player account accessible by the host computer;
providing access to the account responsive to a first command initiated by a player at one of the gaming devices; and
transferring a predetermined credit from the account to the gaming device responsive to a transfer command initiated by the player at said one gaming device.

18. (Amended) The method of claim 17 wherein said method further includes;
permitting gaming device play; and
cashing out from the gaming device responsive to a second command initiated by said player at said one gaming device.

19. (Amended) The method of claim 17 wherein said method further includes;

permitting gaming device play; and

transferring all of the credit from the gaming device to the account responsive to a transfer command initiated by the player at said one gaming device.

20. (Amended) The method of claim 17 wherein creating a player account accessible by the host computer comprises:

issuing a tracking card to the player;

storing a player record on the host computer;

receiving an initial cash deposit from the player; and

crediting the deposit to the account.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein said gaming devices are in a casino and wherein creating a player account accessible by the host computer is performed at a terminal connected to the network by an agent of the casino.

22. The method of claim 17 wherein said first command comprises insertion of a player tracking card into a card reader associated with said one gaming device.

23. The method of claim 18 wherein said second command comprises actuating a cash-out actuator at said one gaming device.

24. The method of claim 17 wherein providing access to the account comprises transmitting data representing the player account over the network to a local memory associated with said one gaming device.

25. The method of claim 24 wherein transferring a predetermined credit from the account to the gaming device comprises transferring data from the player account in the local memory to the credit meter.

26. The method of claim 17 wherein said method further comprises:

reading the a credit meter on said one gaming device before transferring said predetermined credit;

reading the credit meter on said one gaming device after transferring said predetermined credit;

calculating the a difference in the meter readings; and

comparing the calculated difference with the amount transferred.

27. (Amended) The method of claim 26 wherein said method further includes deducting the calculated difference from the account balance.

28. The method of claim 27 wherein said method further comprises storing the amount transferred and the calculated difference at a location on the network remote from the player account.

29. The method of claim 17 wherein the amount of said predetermined credit is a function of the balance in the player account.

30. (Amended) The method of claim 17 wherein the amount of said predetermined credit transferred is a function of a classification of the player.

31. The method of claim 17 wherein said method further comprises:

measuring the time between each player account transaction; and

locking the account when the measured time exceeds at least one established criterion.

32. The method of claim 17 wherein the transfer command initiated by the player at said one gaming device comprises actuating at least one of a plurality of actuators, each of which is associated with a predetermined credit amount.

33. (Amended) A method for operating gaming devices interconnected by a network to a host computer comprising:

creating a player account accessible by the host computer;

providing access to the account responsive to a command initiated by a player at one of the gaming devices;

reading the credit meter a first time;

storing the first meter reading;

transferring credit between the account and the gaming device;

reading the credit meter a second time; and

storing the second meter reading.

34.   (Amended)   The method of claim 33 wherein said method further includes:

adjusting the account by the amount of credit transferred between the account and the gaming device; and

storing the account balance.

35.   The method of claim 34 wherein the stored meter readings are at a different location from the stored account balance.

36.   Cancelled

37.   (Amended)   The method of claim 36 wherein said method further includes:

adjusting the account by the amount of credit transferred between the account and the gaming device; and

storing the account balance after each transfer.

38.   The method of claim 33 wherein creating a player account accessible by the host computer comprises:

issuing a tracking card to the player;

storing a player record on the host computer;

receiving an initial cash deposit from the player; and

crediting the deposit to the account.

39.   The method of claim 38 wherein said gaming devices are in a casino and wherein creating a player account accessible by the host computer is performed at a terminal connected to the network by an agent of the casino.

40.   The method of claim 33 wherein said command comprises insertion of a player tracking card into a card reader associated with said one gaming device.

41.   The method of claim 33 wherein providing access to the account comprises transmitting data representing the player account over the network to a local memory associated with said one gaming device.

42.   The method of claim 33 wherein transferring the credit between the account and the gaming device comprises transferring data between the account in the local memory and the gaming device.

43.   The method of claim 33 wherein said method further comprises:
reading the credit meter on said one gaming device before transferring credit;
reading the credit meter on said one gaming device after transferring credit;
calculating the difference in the meter readings; and
comparing the calculated difference with the amount transferred.

44.   The method of claim 43 wherein method further includes deducting the calculated difference from the account balance.

45.   The method of claim 44 wherein said method further comprises storing the amount transferred and the calculated difference at a location on the network remote from the player account.

46.   The method of claim 33 wherein transferring credit between the account and the gaming device occurs responsive to a player-initiated command at said one gaming device.

47. The method of claim 46 wherein the amount transferred is predetermined.

48. The method of claim 47 wherein the amount transferred is a function of the balance in the player account.

49. (Amended) The method of claim 47 wherein the amount transferred is a function of a classification of the player.

50. The method of claim 33 wherein said method further comprises:
measuring the time between each player account transaction; and
locking the account when the measured time exceeds at least one established criterion.

51. The method of claim 9 wherein said method further comprises;
measuring the time between each player account transaction; and
locking the account when the measured time exceeds at least one established criterion.

52. The method of claim 17 wherein the player account is an anonymous account.

53. The method of claim 20 wherein said gaming devices are in a casino and wherein creating a player account accessible by the host computer is performed at an automated card dispenser.

54. The method of claim 38 wherein said gaming devices are in a casino and wherein creating a player account accessible by the host computer is performed at an automated card dispenser.

55. The method of claim 17 wherein the predetermined credit is calculated by an algorithm.

56. The method of claim 55 wherein the algorithm is stored in local memory.

57.   The method of claim 56 wherein the algorithm checks flags associated with the account for minimum and maximum transfer limits.

58.   The method of claim 57 wherein the minimum and maximum transfer limits are imposed when the account is opened.

59.   The method of claim 17 wherein the amount of said predetermined credit is not a function of the balance in the player account.

60.   The method of claim 55 wherein the algorithm examines the account balance prior to transferring the predetermined credit to prevent transfers in excess of the account balance.

61.   The method of claim 17 wherein the amount of said predetermined credit is not selected by the player.